

The Crisis of Normality

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The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the biggest crisis of our time, resulting in immense and tragic death and suffering around the world. The disruption to our lives and societies brought about by the quarantine and lockdowns around the world, as well as the closure of borders, has prompted a yearning for a return to normality, albeit with the realisation that it will be a "new normal", and whatever form this will take remains to be seen. However, we should acknowledge that the situation even before the COVID-19 pandemic was anything but "normal". We should realise that normality only exists in retrospect, especially in the wake of subsequent chaos and crisis that follow. When we look back and try to reconstruct it, we are really looking at a distortion. We have to realise that at the time, the situation we came to accept as normal, wasn't. It was something far from perfect, with visible and evident faults, to be questioned, improved upon, maybe even disposed of, only not for that worse thing that was brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and revealed a multitude of crises in our world, deep-seated crises which underlie and have become structural in our societies. These include social injustice and inequality, huge socio-economic disparities, decolonisation, racism and xenophobia, political polarisation and oppression, as well as, last but not least, the ecological crisis, which among many others may seem less prominent, but is equally profound. These crises have come to be considered 'normal' due largely to the hegemony of neoliberal attitudes and its resulting structuring of our economies and societies. In claiming to champion human dignity and individual freedom as its fundamental principles, neoliberalism has transformed and unleashed capitalist globalisation as an unbridled force onto our world, resulting in the unchecked spread of capitalism's crisis tendencies.

Art and culture can play an important role in redressing these crises brought about by neoliberalism and capitalism. 'World-making' has always been an important aspect of art. Artists reflect on our societies and our world, highlighting the issues and crises that afflict us, while searching for constructive world pictures and seeking to build coeval connectivity, in the process, envisioning other possibilities of what our world can be. Art, therefore, does not only picture the differences and crises in our societies, but also seeks to counter their destructive effects by enabling better coeval relations. Art, in this sense, becomes a form of agency to effect change in our world for the better.

The artworks highlighted in the pages that follow, which are all drawn from our National Collection, demonstrate how artists have engaged with some of the crises in our world in various ways and at different times. They can ensure that we do not forget the old normal, so that the new normal that we can create is able to redress what was previously anything but normal. They represent the views and interpretations of the respective artists, which some may find provocative and debatable—but that in itself would have served its purpose.

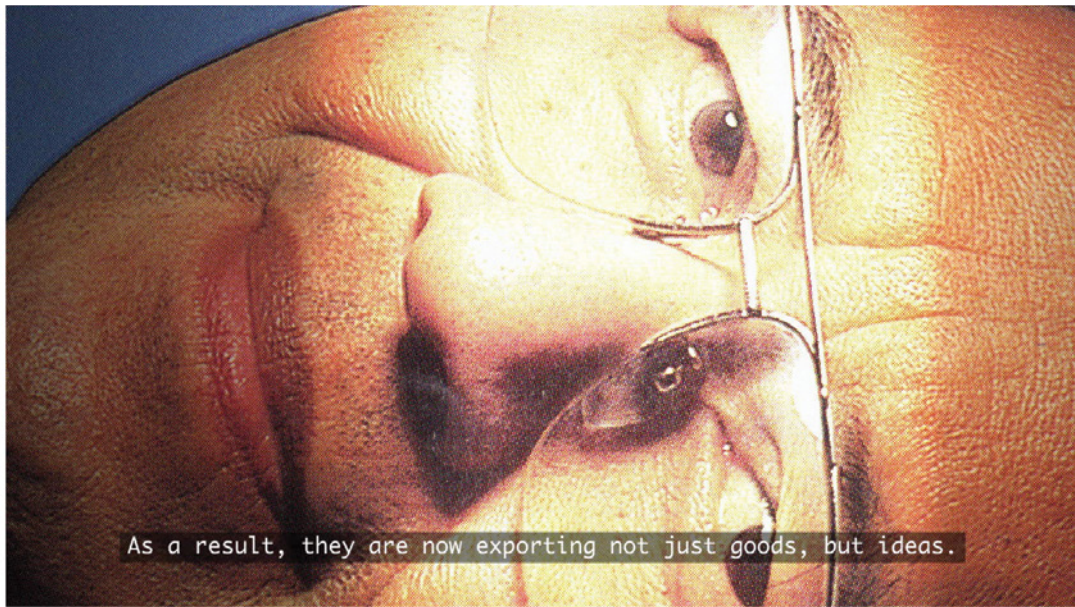


Figure 1. *Student Bodies* by Ho Rui An. 2019. HD Video, 26 min 30 sec.
Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Student Bodies is a video work that unpacks the fraught history of the spread of capitalist modernity and its relationship to radical culture in East and Southeast Asia through the figure of the student body. The work tracks transformations of the student body in the region starting with the students of Satsuma and Choshu from Bakumatsu-era Japan, who were the first ones to be smuggled out of a then-closed society and sent to study in the West. Ho explores the shifting significance of the student body vis-à-vis nationalistic agendas, where it is considered as “both collective and singular,

metaphor and flesh, and stands in for the body politic of the region across the successive periods of ‘miraculous’ development, crises and recoveries through to the present day”. From Japan’s administrative elite (Todaibatsu) in the 1960s to the Thammasat University violence in 1976¹ and beyond, manifestations of the “student body” change from a symbol of the elite nobility to the dead student protestor on the streets, to the scholar-technocrat as an embodiment of the neoliberal state—in each case suggesting how education can be co-opted for economic and political ambition.



Figure 2. *Friends in Need* by Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam. 1986.
Acrylic and collage on canvas. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam's *Friends in Need* prominently features the two figures who were instrumental in effecting the neoliberal turns in Britain and the United States, which subsequently led to the spread of neoliberalisation globally: former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. Together they enacted policies to reduce the constraints on capital, shifting their societies, and the rest of the world, from an embedded-liberalism to neoliberalism. This collage was created to protest the bombing of Libya by the United States in 1986, an act supported by

the United Kingdom. Theatre and contemporary politics intersect as Shanmughalingam deploys traditional Javanese shadow puppet (*wayang purwa*) plat and the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics as social critique. In the collage, Margaret Thatcher appears as the demon Raseki, while Ronald Reagan is the villainous Raksasa Tjakil. *Friends in Need* may be located within a wider artistic turn in Southeast Asia during the 1980s which placed increasing importance on transcending formalist aesthetics to reflect local and global political concerns.



Figure 3. *Drown My Soul at Chico River (Bury My Soul in Chico River)* by Santiago Bose. 1981. Pearlite, wood, aluminium tubes, wire mesh and acrylic paint. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Drown My Soul in Chico River highlights the exploitation of indigenous communities and their ancestral lands by government and corporations in the name of economic development and capitalism. This work was made by Santiago Bose in response to the protest of the Kalinga people, part of the ethnic group known as Igorots, to stop the Chico River dam project. The dam project would have permanently flooded their ancestral lands and despite being under the rule of martial law imposed by then Filipino president

Ferdinand Marcos, the Kalinga people managed to successfully stop the project. It is an important subject matter reflecting the artist's concerns on the issues of the local tribes/people from the Cordillera region where he was born. The title of the work comes partly from a book written in 1970, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Bose, who spent time in the US, was influenced by the increased activism of minority groups there such as the American Indians.



Figure 4. *Red House* by Bounpaul Phothyzan. 2016. 5 framed, c-print photographs, red nylon fabric and PVC pipes. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Red House by Bounpaul Phothyzan is a photo installation that comprises five framed photographs and a red cloth-house sculpture. Three house structures wrapped in red cloth are photographed against a backdrop of rural Laotian landscape. Used to symbolise the three red "houses" of communism in the region—China, Vietnam and Laos, this work casually assesses the influence of China and Vietnam in Laos through the documentation of its changing scenery. In one image, we can imagine ourselves bearing

witness to the unfurling of sky rise buildings that Chinese investment companies have been backing in under-tapped Laos. The incongruity of skyscrapers as they abruptly punctuate the horizon line are significant as a demonstration of how China is seen as attempting to gain a footing in Southeast Asia: through projects such as its Belt and Road Initiative. The polished and poetic capturing of *Red House* belies the growing sociopolitical and geopolitical influences China and Vietnam have on Laos.

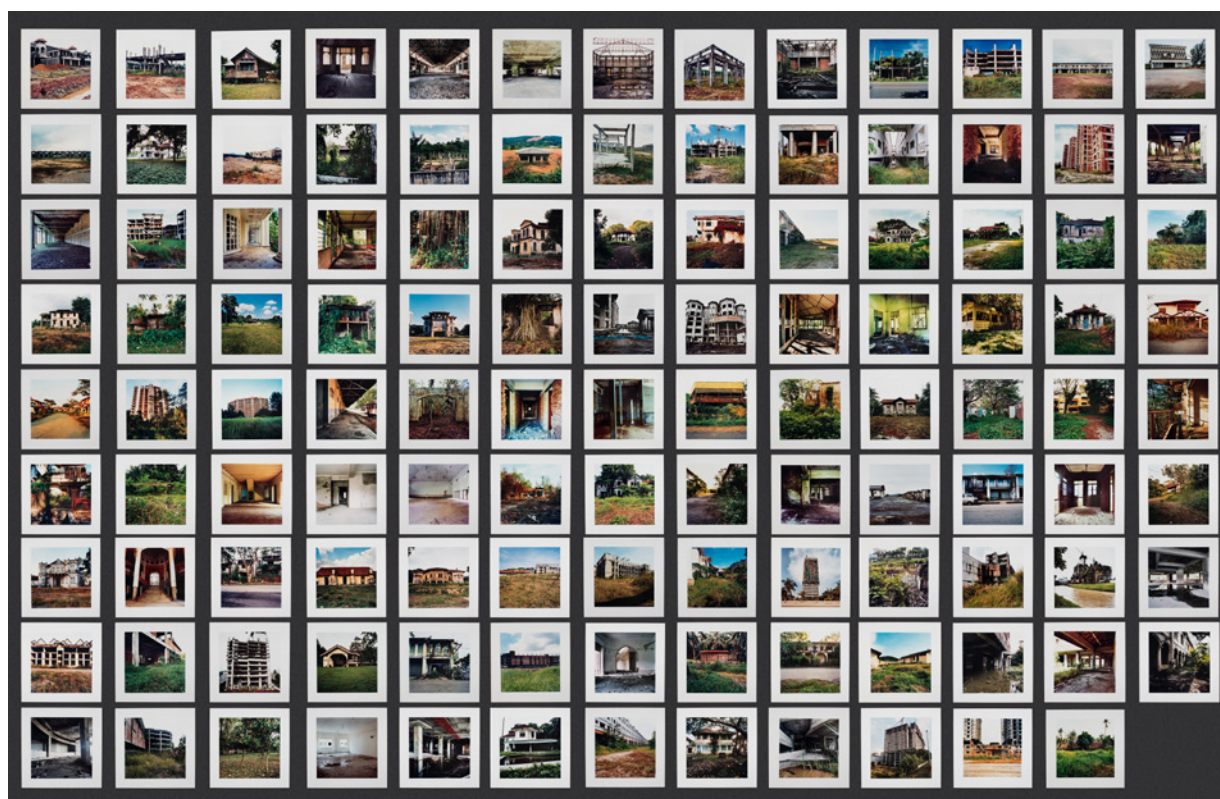


Figure 5. *Standing Still* by Simryn Gill. 2000–2003.

A set of 116 chromogenic prints, dimensions variable. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Simryn Gill’s *Standing Still* depicts construction projects which have been abandoned. Gill was “struck by the growing number of rather ambitious development projects which were simply being abandoned before completion, and were slowly starting to crumble back into the damp and humid landscape.” This work highlights the excesses and

destructive effects of capitalism. This work is also characteristic of the sort of floatiness that Gill potentiates, which melds the ‘tropical’ and the abstract. Gill has herself described the climatic and auratic nature of her works as a crucial mediator and layer, a condition between the stress of being modern and its excesses.



Figure 6. *Picturing Power* by Yee I-Lann, 2013.

Giclée print on Hahnemule Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper.
Image courtesy of the artist. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Yee I-Lann's *Picturing Power* examines the history of colonialisation and its structures of power and control in Southeast Asia. It is a series of works consisting of eight images based on works in the collection of the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, an ethnographic museum that was founded in 1864 in the Netherlands and was then called the "Colonial Museum". Its original intent was to display and research the treasures, products, customs, and ways of life of Dutch overseas colonies, in particular Indonesia. In this work, Yee evokes various ways that the local or the

"native" was seen and conceived of in colonial Southeast Asia. She explores aspects of the relationship between the colonial administration, local communities and the various documentary and classification mechanisms that support this complex relationship. Through this, the work visually underscores the uneasy, delicate nature of the partnership between photography, control, and social and political power, and prompts viewers to think of other narratives that are subsumed in the face of dominant viewpoints.



Figure 7. *Untitled (Raffles)* by Lee Wen. 2000.

Photographic documentation of the interactive site-specific installation as part of A.I.M. (Artists Investigating Monuments) project presented by The Artists Village on 22 July 2000 at Raffles Landing Site. Photograph by Ken Cheong. Digitised by National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive with kind permission from Ken Cheong. RC-S164-KC1.3-5.

Raffles Landing Site was conceptualised as part of the A.I.M. (Artists Investigating Monuments) series. Organised by The Artists Village (TAV), the project invited artists to respond to public sculptures and monuments around the city. For his intervention into the cityscape, Lee Wen built a platform alongside the statue of Sir Stamford

Raffles at the Raffles Landing Site. Members of the public were invited to climb the platform and examine the statue at eye-level, rather than looking up at it. This work not only refigures the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, but also opens up questions about Singapore's relationship to its colonial history.



Figure 8. *The Most Mild Mannered Man* by Fyerool Darma. 2016.
Polymarble, appropriated replica bust and two plinths. Image courtesy of the artist.
Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Driven by his concern about a growing historical amnesia, Fyerool Darma's work presents two key figures in Singapore history: Sir Stamford Raffles and Sultan Hussein Shah, who played pivotal roles through two treaties which culminated in the founding of modern Singapore. The signing of the first treaty in 1819 allowed for the establishment of an East India Company trading post in Singapore, and the Sultan's acknowledgement of the second treaty in 1824 culminated in a complete transfer of power over Singapore and its surrounding islands to British control. The title of the work refers to a quote from Lord Byron's novel *Don Juan*, which was used by colonial official Sir Frank Swettenham to preface his study of the Malay race, entitled *Malay Sketches* (1895).

The artwork, a replica bust of Sir Stamford Raffles, originally produced by Francis Legatt Chantrey in 1817, is featured alongside an empty plinth with the name of the sultan engraved upon a plaque. Through this work, Fyerool explores the relationship between the two individuals, and how

they were subsequently represented in history. The empty plinth that stands across from the bust of Raffles highlights the disparity in attention that history has paid to the two individuals at the forefront of the discussion. While the face of Raffles is a ubiquitous image in Singapore, preserved in both portraiture and sculpture, little is known of what the sultan may have looked like. Typecast as a puppet of the British colonial administration, Sultan Hussein was characterised as a penniless royal living in Riau until his installation by the British as the rightful ruler of Johor-Riau, bringing him prestige and wealth, provided to him by the British colonial administration. With no viable antithesis to this history, the empty plinth becomes symbolic of the relationship between major and minor narratives within historical discourse—reiterating the fact that history is often written by the dominant while the dominated are relegated to assigned roles. This work therefore prompts a re-examination of a history descended from the colonial practice of historicising the Other and the myth of the lazy native that it has propagated.



Figure 9. *Red Morning Glory and Rotten Gun* by Pratuang Emjaroen. 1976.
Oil on canvas. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.
This work of art has been adopted by Sheila Lim Siok Keng.

Red Morning Glory and Rotten Gun captures a tragic time in Thai history—the 1970s, an unstable period characterised by military repression and student protests against the pro-America ruling government. Pratuang Emjaroen founded the Dhamma Group in 1971, gathering dissenting artists who collectively exhibited works perceived as powerful, and for authorities threatening, political statements.

Death is a major theme in this work. Painting in the aftermath of the 1973 Thai popular uprising, Pratuang depicts the bloodshed arising from government-led violence against demonstrating university students. In the foreground of the

painting lies decaying remains in a “rotten gun” alongside a decapitated statue of the Buddha; Pratuang frequently used Buddhist iconography to emphasise the loss of innocence brought on by brutality. Further back, a Thai flag is raised on a pile of bones, bodies memorialised by a headstone shot through with bullet holes and inscribed with the events of 1973.

An affecting reflection of the sociopolitical concerns of the day, *Red Morning Glory and Rotten Gun* also foreshadowed the Thammasat University violence of 1976, in which hundreds of Thai students were wounded or killed.



Figure 10. *Marsinah* by Semsar Siahaan. 1993.
Ink on paper, Poster. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Although a relatively modest ink drawing, *Marsinah* was created by Semsar Siahaan in 1993 to commemorate the death of Marsinah, a female factory worker who fought for the rights of her fellow workers and who was subsequently brutalised and murdered. That year, the Yap Thiam Hien human rights award went to Marsinah and her family, and Semsar's drawing was turned into a poster which was distributed to Indonesian non-governmental organisations (NGO) concerned with workers' rights. The stark black-white-red colour scheme of Semsar's drawing and its vivid and powerful use of linework echoes the tradition of Social Realist woodcut prints, and perfectly complements its rousing imagery—Marsinah is depicted in the foreground, her clenched fist raised to the sky in a universal symbol of activism and protest. In the background, the proletariat unite in their political awakening, bearing banners that call for labourers' rights.

A significant figure in Indonesia's art history, Semsar was well known for his stirring, socially-committed art which sought to "try to change the miserable state of human values resulting from injustice". With a strong conviction in the importance of art as the voice of the people—in particular the dispossessed and oppressed—Semsar participated in several demonstrations against the brutality of the New Order regime, resulting in his physical injury and subsequent departure for Canada due to fears over his personal safety. *Marsinah* is exemplary of the power of Semsar's art, the causes he believed in and fought for all his life, and captures the strident spirit of 1990s Indonesia when artists harnessed the power of art to seek redress for social injustices.



Figure 11. *Tapestry of Justice* by Wong Hoy Cheong. 1999-2004.
Installation; thumbprints, petals of flowers and leaves. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Wong Hoy Cheong's *Tapestry of Justice* was developed using copies of the thousands of thumbprints collected during the Reformasi movement in Malaysia, which are connected by leaves and petals of plants like hibiscus, roses and beech. The contribution of thumbprints constitutes symbolic actions for the repeal of Malaysia's Internal Security Act (ISA). The beauty and delicate nature of the tapestry is an ironic comment on how important and fragile basic civil rights are. As Wong relates it, he began the work

after the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim, in September 1998. *Tapestry of Justice* began life simultaneously as a petition—against the ISA—and a work of art, with Wong approaching strangers in public areas to solicit support. The petition and work began in Kuala Lumpur. Wong went around to bus stops, pubs, NGO meetings, churches, Reformasi demonstrations etc. to seek support and thumbprints, explaining what he was doing to total strangers, and asking whether they were for or against the ISA.



Figure 12. *Age of Full Bloom* by San Minn. 1979.

Oil and metal chain on canvas. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. Image courtesy of San Minn.

San Minn's *Age of Full Bloom* is an example of the explicit censorship of art. The work was censored by the then-Burmese authorities when it was exhibited at the 2nd Gangaw Village Art Exhibition in 1979², evidenced by rectangular stamp marks that mar the woman's arm and background. *Age of Full Bloom* was created soon after San Minn's release from Insein Prison where he had been imprisoned for three years following his involvement in the anti-government U Thant crisis of 1974. The artist symbolically incorporates the colours and star motif from the national flag of the Socialist

Republic of the Union of Burma, adopted for use in 1974, in the clothes worn by a woman standing with her arms crossed, dignified and in apparent defiance. Her head has been replaced by a bouquet of blooming roses, while a metal chain necklace bearing a pendant of the word "love" has been sewn directly around her neck. By juxtaposing the woman's stance and symbolic elements of the then-newly introduced flag with symbols of harmony and renewal, the work draws correlation between political resistance and regeneration, albeit with some ambiguity.



Figure 13. *Rohingya Portraits No.3* by Sawangwongse Yawngghwe. 2015. Sumi ink on rice paper (28 portraits). Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Sawangwongse Yawngghwe's *Rohingya Portraits No. 3* highlights the humanitarian disaster and displacement of refugees from Rakhine State in Myanmar. The suite of 28 portraits are based on refugees who appeared in a photograph depicting them on the boat arriving in Bangladesh from Myanmar in an online article on TIME, in 2014, by Charlie Campbell. As Yawngghwe wrote of the impulse behind the piece: "I made the decision to portray them individually giving them each

a format of 'portraiture'. I do not know the individuals personally, the reason that compelled me to translate into the drawing pages was that I can relate to them. They are born and lived in Burma all their lives, are they not in this case my countrymen? The world is gripped by the horrors that have driven the Rohingya into Bangladesh, but these same horrors have been the reality faced by millions of ethnic people in Burma for several decades."

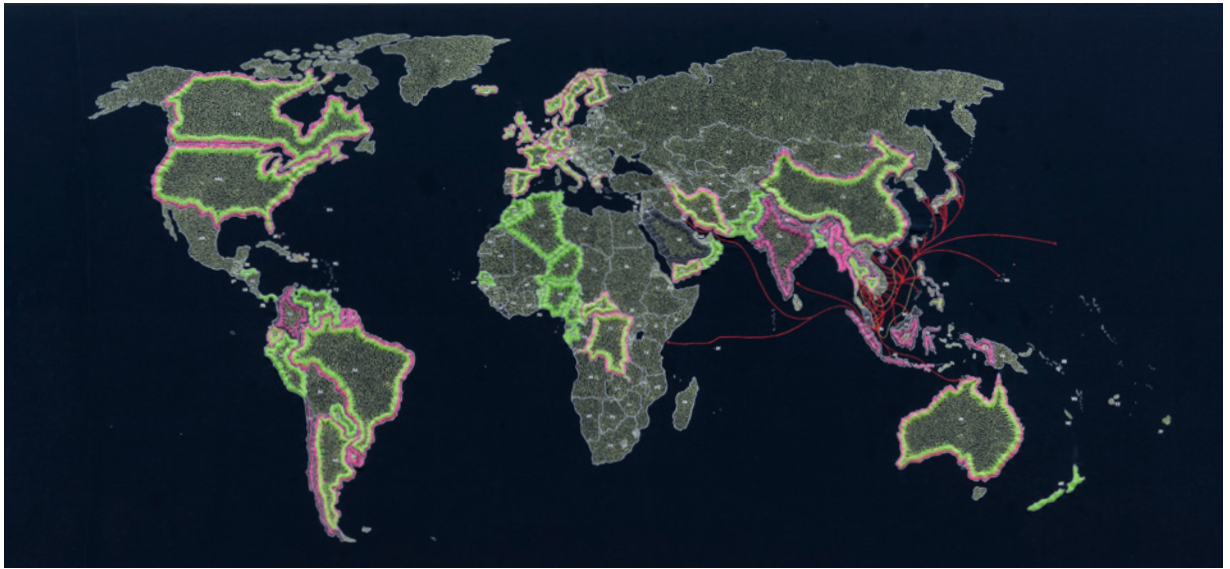


Figure 14. *reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries* by Tiffany Chung, 2017. Embroidery on fabric. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Tiffany Chung's *reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries* is a hand-embroidered map of the world which locates the departure point, route and ports of disembarkation of fleeing Vietnamese who left their homeland by boat between 1979 and 1989 as political refugees after the Vietnam war to other countries around Asia and onwards to other parts of the world. The map, comprising neon threading against a deep blue background, demonstrates the hand of the artist; from afar the thread work appears consistently even, but closer inspection reveals subtle variances in its stitching. These subtle slippages locate the artist in the work whilst reflecting on that which often goes undetected in historical narratives.

reconstructing an exodus history was produced within a wider series on historical amnesia, titled *The Vietnam Exodus Project*, that focused on the plight of the Vietnamese boat people in their attempts to survive perilous journeys out at sea to search for a safer life which, as other works in the series suggest, are no easier than that which they left behind. For Chung, her intricate maps layer different periods of history together to reflect the impossibility of accurately creating a cartographic representation of most places. As transgressions of space and time, they also unveil the connections between imperialist ideology and visions of modernity that still linger and influence the geopolitical and physical transformations of Vietnam and Southeast Asia.



Figure 15. *Journey of A Yellow Man No. 11: Multi-Culturalism* by Lee Wen. 1997. Inkjet print on paper, with accompanying video documentation of performance; Video: single channel, 4:3 format, colour and sound (stereo), 7 min 57 sec. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Journey of A Yellow Man No.11: Multi-culturalism is part of Lee Wen's *Journey of a Yellow Man* series (1992–2012). For Lee, the colour yellow came to symbolise for him the colour of the persecuted and the oppressed, as well as the ubiquitous racial stereotype of Asians. This work operates as both a performance documentation and artwork. It records the artist's performance executed during the Sept Fest Art Conference: "Multiculturalism in Singapore", held at The Substation in September 1997. At the conference, remaining full-clothed, Lee Wen covered himself in yellow paint, and presented a paper discussing the prevailing "conservatism" in Singapore art that privileged particular artistic mediums over other. Arguing

against the situation, where he perceived the overrepresentation of certain mediums such as watercolour, Chinese painting and calligraphy, and lack of visibility for 'experimental art' such as installation and performance practices during the period, the artist went on to form the letters C(hinese), M(alay), I(ndian) and O(ther) out of rice, and subsequently obliterated the arrangement. He then began to strip to his briefs, got into a bathtub and washed his yellow colour off. The performance ended by a bottling of the yellow bath water into several plastic containers, which were given away to the audience, with the artist claiming, "Now I am a water colourist too!"

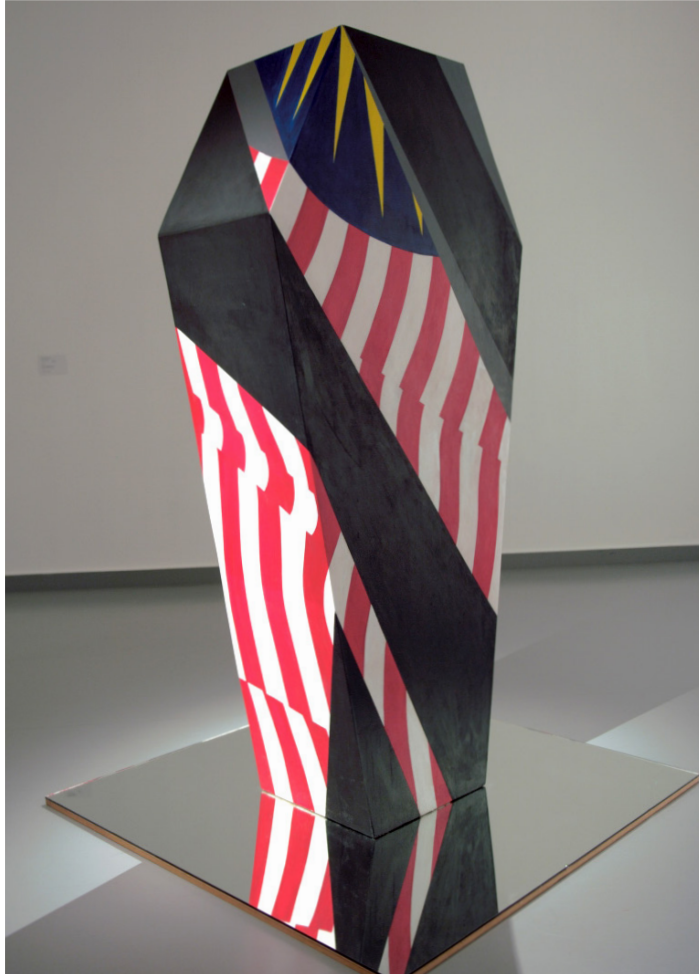


Figure 16. *May 13, 1969* by Redza Piyadasa. 1969, reconstructed 2006. Acrylic on plywood and mirror. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Redza Piyadasa's *May 13, 1969* was made in response to the deadly racial riots which erupted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia following the general election, leading to fatalities and a state of emergency. Although Redza Piyadasa did not witness the violence, he was shattered to see the destruction it had caused when he arrived there a few months later. For the first time, he felt "a sense of foreboding about the nation." This pessimism

is captured in this sculpture. Fragments of the Malaysian flag are painted on the surfaces of a coffin-like structure, which is mounted onto a mirror that serves to both connect the past and the present, and remind us of the fragility of ethnic relations in our societies. *May 13, 1969* was originally produced for the *Manifestasi Dua Seni* exhibition in 1970, making it the first time that Piyadasa addressed political issues in his work.

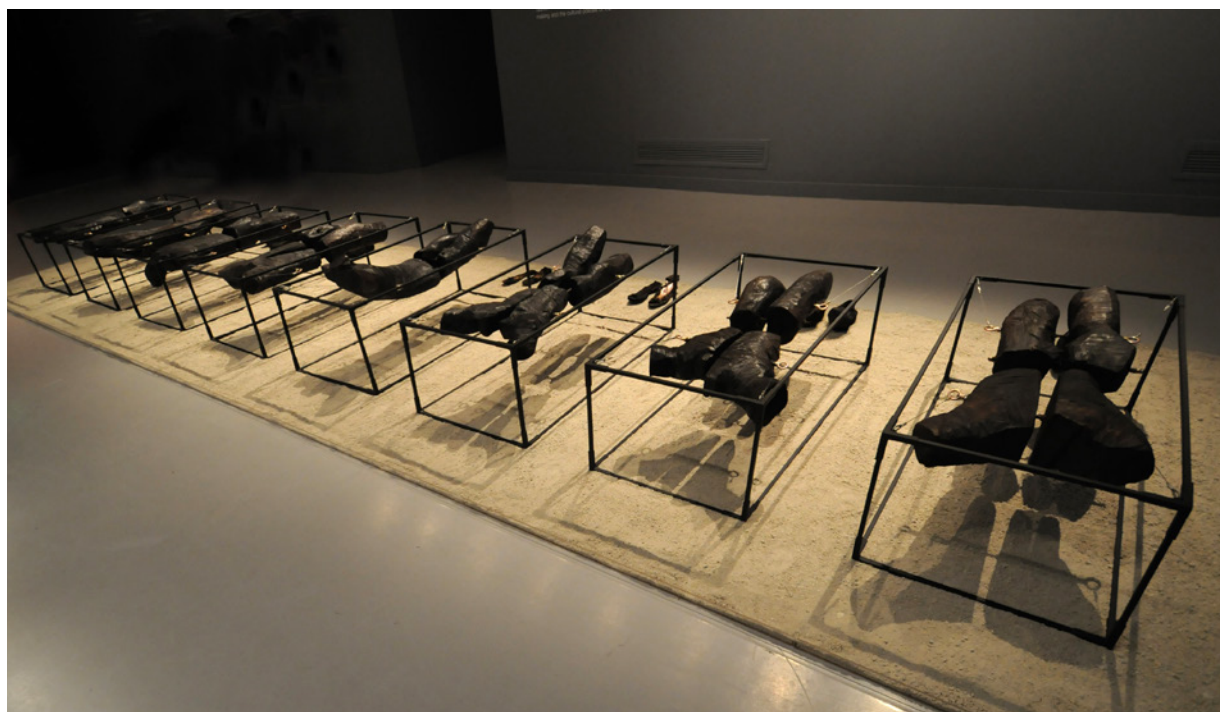


Figure 17. *Burned Victims* by FX Harsono. 1998.
Installation and performance video. Image courtesy of artist. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Conceptualised by FX Harsono as a performance-installation, the performance component of *Burned Victims* involved the burning of five wooden torsos, during which a placard was displayed to the audience, bearing the word *kerusuhan*, or 'riot'. In the work's installation component, the blackened remains of the wooden torsos are suspended in oblong metal frames, arrangements of regular lines which highlight the agonised contortions of the torsos. Placed before each torso is a pair of burnt footwear, rendering the figures even more forlorn. This performance-installation was made in response to a tragic episode of the May 1998 riots, during which the rioting mob stormed a shopping mall, sealed off its exits and set it on fire. The motives for such callous brutality remain unknown, but one possible explanation proposes the military as the instigator of the riots, which gave them free rein to

intimidate people and suppress student activism. Whatever the reasons—which remain unknown—the hundreds of people who were trapped and burnt to death in the shopping mall were all victims of a power struggle that culminated in the downfall of Suharto.

In an almost photo-journalistic fashion, the artist presents to his audience the scorching image of the victims' bodies, to elicit horror and condemnation of civil violence. This work, created in response to a particular incident during the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, is a powerful installation and performance from a critical turning point in both Harsono's art practice as well as the history of Indonesia. Like much of Harsono's earlier works, it makes a strong statement about the horrors of civil violence and the fate of the victimised masses.



Figure 18. *Air Pollution* by Made Wianta. 2014.
Motorcycle exhaust pipes, stainless pipe, dry ice, sound. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

Made Wianta created *Air Pollution* to highlight the ecological crisis resulting from urban development and over tourism today. *Air Pollution* is a commentary on the environmental problems engulfing Bali today, as it transitions from a largely agrarian society into an increasingly urban sprawl. The installation comprises a snarl of motorcycle exhaust pipes, alluding to the traffic congestion plaguing Bali's roads. When it was first presented in Bali at the exhibition *Bali On The Move*, Wianta orchestrated a performance

where 'smoke' spewed out from the installation, and visitors were assaulted by a soundtrack of revving engines, adding to the overwhelming sensorial assault of an urban environment. While *Air Pollution* was created in response to issues in Bali, its commentary on the city and urban congestion could just as easily be applied to other cities in Indonesia (such as Jakarta), as well as to other rapidly developing metropolitan centres across the world.



Figure 19. *Untitled* by Khvay Samnang. 2011–2013.
5-channel video installation. Collection of Singapore Art Museum.

In this work, Khvay Samnang draws attention to what he perceives to be the exploitation of local communities and natural resources in the service of development, as well as of displacement and censorship. Beginning in 2010, the Cambodian government started offering Phnom Penh's lakes for private sale, which resulted in many of the lakes being filled with sand to make way for urban development. The reclamation of the lakes, which were important hydraulic systems and vibrant residential sites, has resulted in the displacement of over 4,000 families and the loss of livelihoods dependent on the lake. Many of those evicted were given little compensation. This became international news and resulted in persistent protest in Phnom Penh, even though protesters

were reportedly regularly imprisoned, abused, or ignored. Samnang made this work by illegally entering the five Phnom Penh lakes, bypassing the armed security to film himself pouring a bucket of sand over his head. As many of the lakes documented in this work no longer exist, Samnang's work also records the once-existence of these lakes and communities for future generations. It reflects the nature of development taking place in Cambodia, one that is arguably ignoring the needs of its people and communities. The title of the work also refers to the restrictions and control imposed by the Cambodian government, where the work could not be spoken about and described as lake-sites due to its highly political and sensitive nature at the time of its making.



Figure 20. *They Poach the Rhino, Chop Off His Horn and Make This Drink* by Tang Da Wu. 1989. Cloth rhino, 100 glass bottles, axe, video, dimensions variable. Collection of National Gallery Singapore Performance © Tang Da Wu. Photo © Koh Nuang How; courtesy of Koh Nuang How. Documentation of performance at National Museum Art Gallery, Singapore, 1989.

Following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, Tang Da Wu began addressing social and ecological issues in his art, believing that art should provoke discussion instead of merely providing aesthetic pleasure or entertainment. *They Poach the Rhino, Chop Off His Horn and Make This Drink* was a response to the practice of hunting rhinoceros for their horns to be used for traditional Chinese medicine. It preceded another similar work by Tang, *Tiger's Whip* (1991) which continued to address the implications of a community's cultural beliefs upon the natural world, to the point that it could bring about the extinction of an entire species.

A combination of performance and installation art, the life-size papier-mâché rhino without a horn lying in the middle of the bottles of medicinal drink and in front of a white axe, alludes to the rhino's immense suffering and impending extinction. Made of paper, the rhino's fragility is further emphasised. In the performance, Tang, with his face powdered white, performs around the installation, delivering a moving address on the subject. This work poignantly highlights the role of consumerism in the destruction of nature and its contribution to our ecological crisis. □

Notes:

1. Also referred to in the media as the 6 October 1976 massacre, or in Thailand as the 6 October event.
2. Burma changed its name to the Union of Myanmar in 1989, and subsequently to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.